

# TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY

# **TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY**

**BY**

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# INTRODUCTION

Just as travellers of past centuries recorded their personal impressions in diaries; the modern day traveller uses a camera to record the sights and events of his journeys.

Travel photography is as old as photography itself, with the invention of photography, travellers set out with their primitive cameras and started recording the world as never before.

The aim in this dissertation is to explore the origins of travel photography; discussing some of the pioneers of travel photography. To summarize some of the categories of travel photography, and the importance of diversity.

Many problems were encountered and where possible solutions offered. The author will also discuss his travels and attempt to analyse the images taken during these travels.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **HISTORY OF TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY**



The invention of photography made it possible for people to see the world as never before. It brought distant cultures, flora and fauna to the man who could not afford to see it. The travel photographer did more than provide visual imagery. He showed the viewer how other people lived; dressed; married; amused themselves and died.

The true invention of photography can be attributed to a Frenchman named Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre.<sup>1</sup> His process was called the Daguerreotype process.<sup>2</sup> This process made it possible for the world to be recorded as never before.

Travellers now carried cameras to every part of the world. Daguerreotypes<sup>3</sup> of inanimate objects like architectural subjects and landscapes were exhibited and sold. Photography was still out of the reach of the ordinary 'man in the street' but it now became possible to purchase images of distant places.

Between 1840 and 1844, 114 travel views were issued in Paris as a series of *Excursions daguerriennes*;<sup>4</sup> published by Noël-Marie-Paymal Lerebours.<sup>5</sup>

Lerebours commissioned photographers to make daguerreotypes in various parts of the world from Niagra falls to Moscow. Over 1200 views were collected; some were selected and copied by tracing and then transferred to copper plates.<sup>6</sup>

Figures and traffic were added to these daguerreotypes to make them more interesting.<sup>7</sup>

The biggest drawback of the daguerreotype invention was that it was a one off process, duplicates could not be made afterwards.

The Calotype process;<sup>8</sup> invented by William Henry Fox Talbot succeeded in producing the first fully fixed paper negative, from which unlimited prints could be made.<sup>9</sup>



Fig. 1 The early photographer, with his portable equipment

Maxime Du Camp was one of the first photographers to make use of this calotype process on trips to the Middle East. Du Camp took up photography because he noted in his *"Recollections of a Literary Life"*, "I had realized upon my previous travels that I wasted much valuable time trying to draw buildings and scenery. I did not care to forget. I drew slowly and not very correctly ... I felt that I needed an instrument of precision to record my impressions if I was to reproduce them accurately ..." <sup>10</sup>

Du Camp returned after 21 months with 220 Calotypes and an album of photographic prints was made, which he brought out in 25 weekly installments of five plates each.

His plates showed many of the ancient ruins of Egypt. They were not the first photographs ever made of Egypt. Egypt had already been daguerretyped by a few photographers, but Du Camp's work was reproducible. <sup>11</sup> However the calotype process was far from perfect, the biggest problem encountered was the lack of quality obtained from using a paper negative. The other problem was that Fox Talbot had patented his process in 1841, placing restrictions on it. <sup>12</sup>

A major improvement occurred in photography in 1851 with the invention of the collodion process <sup>13</sup> by Frederick Scott Archer. Within a decade it completely replaced both the daguerreotype and the calotype process, and continued with its success until the 1880's. <sup>14</sup> Glass plates were used instead of paper for negatives. The problem was finding a suitable substance to stick the light sensitive material to the glass. Albumen, from eggs was found to work, patented in 1847 by Claude Félix Abel Niepce de St Victor. Its biggest drawback was that it had a low sensitivity, making exposures very long. Collodion proved to be a better alternative. <sup>15</sup> Collodion proved to be a perfect binder needed to keep the light sensitive materials on the glass plate; Frederick Scott Archer failed to patent his invention, which made it easier for a person to attempt to practice this process. <sup>16</sup> Albumen coated paper continued to be used for producing the positive print.



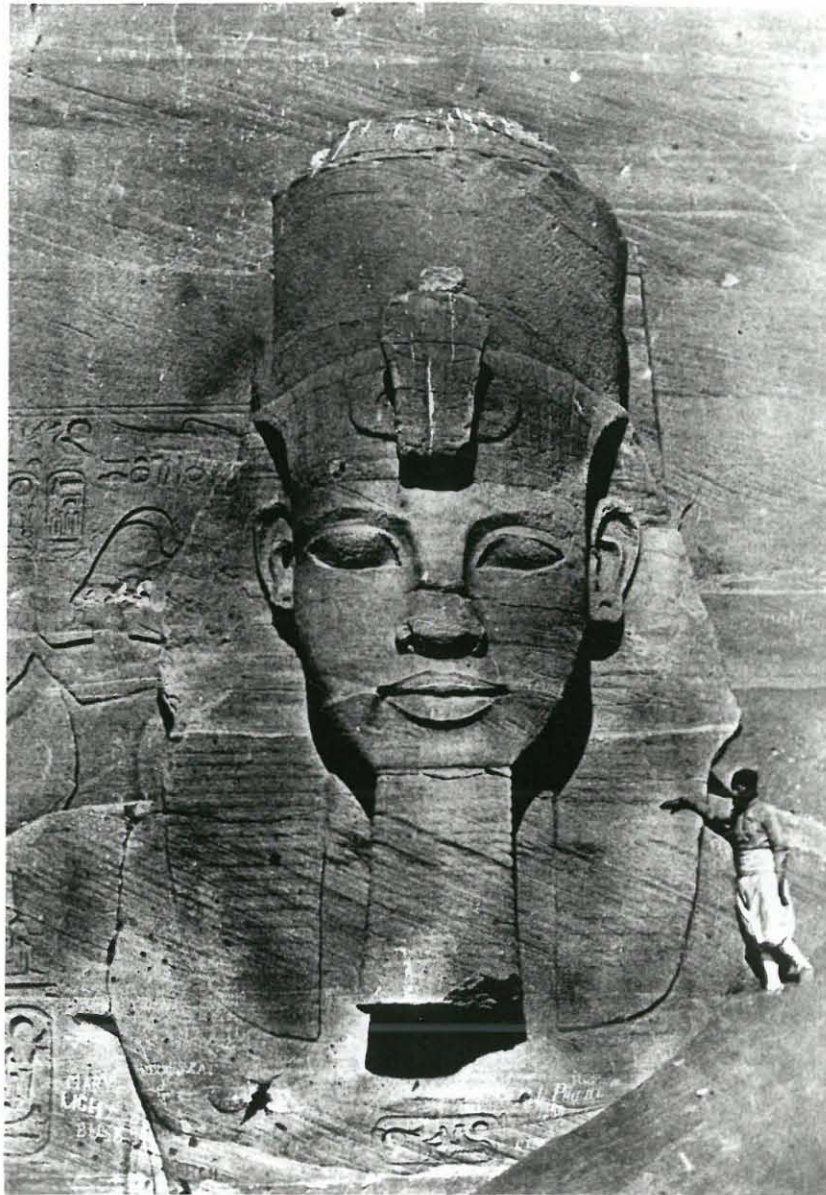


Fig 2

Maxime Du Camp: The Colossus of Abu-Simbel,  
Nubia 1850  
Newhall B.

Albumen was *easily* absorbed into the paper making it possible to hold enough light sensitive material.<sup>17</sup>

Photographers from all over the world set out, making use of this new invention. Francis Frith was one of these photographers. He did extensive trips to the Middle East. When he landed in Alexandria; in Egypt in 1856 the interior of Africa was still virgin territory. Not until two years later did Sir Richard Burton and John Speke begin their search for the source of the Nile. Between 1856 and 1859 Frith went deeper into Africa than any photographer before him. He photographed the Sphinx when its front paws were still hidden in the sand.<sup>18</sup>

Frith was one of the first photographers to turn photography into a thriving business. In 1860 he opened the largest picture factory; called Frith and Co., sending photographs all over the world. By the end of the 1870's Frith had become the worlds largest manufacturer of photographs.<sup>19</sup>

Another important travel photographer of that period was a Scotsman, John Thomson. In 1862 he set off for the Far East. He spent five years in China, Thomsons main interest was documentary. While in China he documented various Chinese practices, from opium smoking to public execution and torture. The Chinese were very superstitious and he was often placed in danger trying to photograph them. Assaults on him and his camera were frequent. Thomson also photographed a cross section of the Chinese culture from coal-miners to government officials. His travels resulted in a four volume series *Illustrations of China and its People*.<sup>20</sup> His introduction to his book goes as follows: "It is a novel experiment to attempt to illustrate a book with photographs, a few years back so perishable, and so difficult to reproduce. But the art is now so far advanced, that we can multiply the copies with the same facility, and print them with the same materials as in the case of woodcuts or engravings. I feel somewhat sanguine about the success of the undertaking, and hope to see the



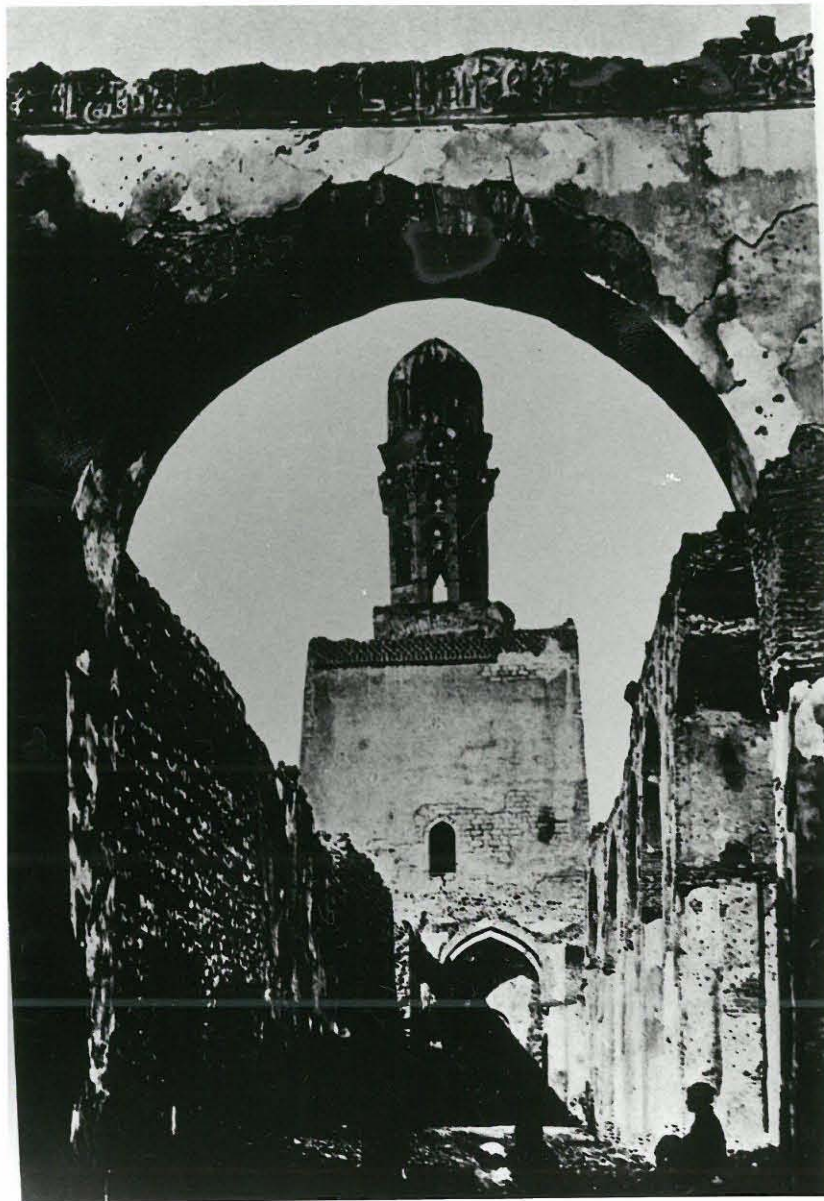


Fig. 3 Francis Frith: Mosque of El-Hakim in Cairo, 1858



process which I have thus applied adopted by other travellers; for the faithfulness of such pictures affords the nearest approach that can be made towards placing the reader actually before the scene which is represented."<sup>21</sup> This book was illustrated with 200 of his photographs.

Back in England the Victorians viewed his photography very seriously and no one thought of Thomsons pictures as 'art', least of all Thomson himself. His purpose was simply to instruct. But in recording the previously unrecorded, he produced a body of work with "that science of the immediacy and authenticity of documentation, which a photograph can impart so forcibly."<sup>22</sup>

In America during the 1860's photographers trekked West with packhorses on expeditions to document the previously unexplored.<sup>23</sup> The West was beautiful but difficult to travel on. The cameras were heavy and difficult to travel with. As enlargements were impractical at the time, oversized plates were taken. Photographers were still using the Collodian process, so portable (tent) darkrooms had to be taken with. Plates had to be prepared and exposed while still wet, Indians were often hostile, but the photographers still managed to overcome this.<sup>24</sup>

William Henry Jackson was one of the photographers who trekked West. He became famous as the man who revealed in pictures the glory of the American West. Jackson joined the US Geological survey team that was mapping and searching for natural resources. He photographed the Yellowstone Region and helped convince Congress to establish the area as a National park in 1872.<sup>25</sup>

Another American photographer who documented the West was Carleton Eugene Watkins. He photographed the Yosemite Valley, his pictures show the Valley as a giant land of tranquil waters and beauty, with no trace of human habitation. In 1868 "The Yosemite Book" was published with a large number of his photographs illustrating the pages.<sup>26</sup> What Jacksons photographs did for the

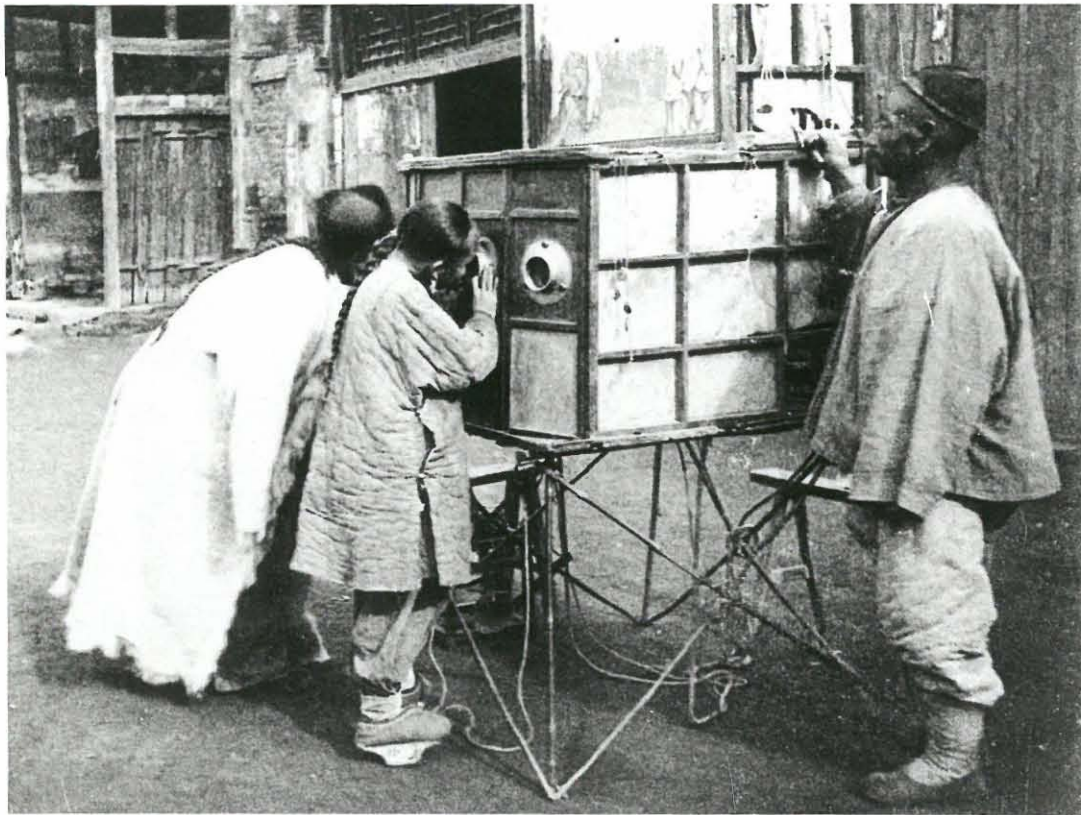


Fig 4 John Thomson; Street Amusements and Occupations,  
Peking 1868

Yellowstone Region, Watkins's photographs did for the Yosemite, convincing Congress to establish the Yosemite as a National Park in 1890.<sup>27</sup>

The invention of the dry plate process<sup>28</sup> in the 1870's and the introduction of George Eastmans Kodak number one camera in 1888 brought about major changes in photography.

For the first time the photographer did not have to know anything about chemicals and processing as with the previous processes. Eastman's slogan "You press the button, we do the rest"<sup>29</sup> changed photography forever. With the introduction of mass-produced cameras and film, the tourist photographer was born.



Fig. 5

William Henry Jackson; The Beehive Group of Geysers;  
Yellowstone Park, 1872





Fig. 6 Carleton Watkins, Agassiz Column in the  
Yosemite Valley 1874

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## CHAPTER TWO

### THE ROLE OF TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY

*"We photographers deal in things that are continually vanishing, and when they have vanished. There is no contrivance on earth that can make them come back again. We cannot develop and print a memory"*

- Henri Cartier-Bresson

Before the invention of George Eastman's first Kodak camera, tourists had to rely on a local photographer usually found in front of the famous tourist attractions. He would take your photography and then sell the photographs for a small amount.<sup>1</sup>

Today nearly all travellers carry cameras, sometimes more than one. A holiday would not be complete without a camera.

In America during the turn of the century, Kodak put up signs at town entrances, listing what should be photographed, and in the national parks there were signs where photographers should stand in order to get a good photograph. Today tourists still feel it necessary to take that scenic shot of the distant horizon.

When a person holds a camera to his eye it gives him power, even if it is for only 1/125 second. Most people feel self conscious when being photographed. They are afraid of not looking their best. The camera is a powerful tool. However the tourist normally feels less concerned about being photographed. A reason for this is that they are being photographed constantly and their guard is soon dropped.

Holidays seem to be the time when cameras are taken out of the 'mothballs' so to speak and travellers start to waste film. It seems impossible to simply take one photograph of a scene. Usually five or six photographs will appear; all equally boring. The only person who is truly interested in someones holiday pictures are the people who were involved in the pictures. It brings on a certain nostalgia, and holiday memories are usually exchanged. One of the priorities of the tourist on returning home is to have those precious holiday 'snaps' developed and printed. To be able to relive those memories. To offer evidence that the trip was actually made and enjoyed.



Fig 7

On the Beach, 1910  
Coe B.



The true role of travel photography is to document places, people and objects seen by the photographer, and the results should make the viewer want to travel, to want to experience the places for themselves.

Any picture that captures the unique qualities of a location can be called a travel photograph. Therefore most photographs fall into this category. Even your own town is a new place to a visitor. People tend to think of travel photography in terms of exotic locations, but that is defining it very narrowly. Travel photography should include many different subjects, such as people, architecture, food, recreation and even art. Amateurs and professionals often make use of the same equipment, the only major difference between them is that the professionals do it for profit, while amateurs take photographs for pleasure.

Another role of travel photography is to document places and civilizations which are vanishing before our eyes. The future of Hong Kong is uncertain. It might change completely after 1997 when it returns to China.<sup>2</sup> Many countries in Africa have undergone complete change, or destruction. It is therefore important to capture these places of the world before they disappear.

Brochures play an important role in travel. The purpose of these brochures is to captivate the viewer, to convince the traveller that the destination advertised is worth visiting. Travel brochures can also be a source of income for professional photographers. The problem with travel brochures and postcards is that they show the location at its best; taken during the best time year; usually showing perfect conditions.

This can be very deceiving to the traveller, and also influence the photographs that are taken by the photographer. Many travellers feel compelled, if not obliged to shoot the scenic wonders in a particular area. This type of picture is often seen in brochures. Seeing and capturing something unusual about a landmark or a popular area can be almost impossible because famous sights have

already been photographed a million times. The only way many viewers respond to photographs of familiar scenes is to identify the location. This creates the problem of repetition or reproduction of the brochure. While these photographs can be pleasant reminders of an exciting trip, they can also seem familiar, repetitive and uninteresting.

"The very word cliché entered the English language through photography; it comes from the French term that is applied to photographic negatives and other means of reproducing a single image over and over again. And yet, professional postcard makers and amateur photographers together have not exhausted all the aspects of monuments; buildings and landscapes that have become clichés only through their photographs."<sup>3</sup>

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# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **CATEGORIES OF TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY**

Any picture that captures and interprets the unique qualities of a place can be called a travel photograph. People usually think of travel photography in terms of a calendar shot. But that is not the complete definition. Travel photography should include many subjects, like people; statements of their lifestyles and cultures; architecture; nature and the surrounding landscapes.

All these elements contribute to making good travel photographs. The photographer must make use of colour and light.

Travel photography can basically be divided into the following categories:

LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

PEOPLE; including Documentary and Portraiture

ARCHITECTURE

NATURE

DETAILS AND CLOSE-UPS

## LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

*"Landscapes are never the same twice. It is the light that changes them and gives them a new meaning every time"*

- Sonja Bullaty

Photographers have very little control over landscapes, as they never remain constant. The continued change brought about by time of day, seasons and most important the change of light.

Unlike other types of photography landscape photographers rely on one light source, the sun. This is what makes landscape photography so interesting and difficult. The photographer has to revolve his shooting around the light. Sudden changes in weather can reveal excellent landscapes that went unnoticed a few seconds earlier. It is therefore important for the landscape photographer to have his camera constantly ready to capture that 'right' moment.

Lighting technique in landscape photography can be divided into three factors: colour; direction and quality.

But it is impossible to generalize about lighting. Landscape photographs taken early in the morning or before sunset are usually among the best.

The light is usually warm and rich, creating a strong mood. From nine o'clock in the morning to four o'clock in the afternoon, light becomes flat and less attractive. Colours seem to be washed out and without the use of a polarizing filter<sup>1</sup> saturation is not obtained.

Bright sunlight is not essential; overcast skies create soft light which reduces shadows and can create images of delicate tones and colours. Rain, mist and fog can also produce dramatic landscapes. Providing the photographers equipment is



Fig 8

G.R. I'Ons: Seascape: Comores



protected; photographers should venture outside. The weather dominates the landscape; thick clouds and mist reduce contrast and colour but they can be dramatic and ominous.

It is important to wait, if possible, for the right light conditions, sometimes by waiting a few minutes longer can make the difference between an average landscape and an excellent landscape.

While attempting to photograph a landscape, composition is one of the most important factors. The photographer has full control over what he shoots and how he does it.

Composition is an arrangement of the graphic elements of an image, to enhance or create an impression.

Landscape photographers are observers, not designers of their surroundings. By using composition rather than manipulation of subjects, will result in landscape photographs with meaning. A landscape photographer must move around to achieve the best composition for a photograph.

The position of the horizon is nearly always a dominant factor in landscape photography. It divides the picture into two, and where the photographer decides to place the horizon, will alter the feeling of the image.

If the horizon appears near the top of the picture, the land or sea will be the main point of interest. If the horizon appears near the bottom of the picture the sky will normally dominate the picture; creating a feeling of open space. This can also enhance the mood if there are storm clouds in the sky. Very seldom is the horizon placed in the centre of the picture; it can cause the picture to look static and could cause tension. But if the tonal values are compatible, placing the horizon in the centre can suggest tranquility.

The sky can play an important role in creating a good photograph. The use of clouds can enhance a sometimes rather bland landscape. Making use of a polarizing filter can give clouds a more dramatic effect. Sunset and sunrises are popular choices for landscapes and depend on good cloud formation and colour.

Cloudless skies can also be dramatic, especially when using a polarizer to darken the blue and used in conjunction with other strong vibrant colours.

Water can add a hypnotic effect to a landscape. Water has many moods, from calm and mirror-like to powerful and frightening. The visual quality of water lends itself to three factors:

Colour; reflection and movement.

The colour, which is determined by the sky, blue skies usually create blue water whereas overcast skies create grey moody water. The second factor is reflection. The sky and reflection go hand in hand. But other elements such as trees and mountains create interesting reflections. The third factor is movement. The photographer can also control the desired effect of the movement by making use of different shutter speeds.

## PEOPLE

Travel photography would be incomplete without the human element. Travel photographs of people relate to the viewer the diversity of mankind. Photographers are often afraid to photograph people, because it normally means making contact, having to relate in some way or another. It seems unusual that photographers should find it difficult to photograph people. A reason for this could be that the photographer creates a barrier between himself and the subject being photographed. Photographing inanimate objects is a lot easier than a person because part of that barrier has to be dropped when your subject is a person.



Fig 9

G.R. l'Ons: Portrait: Comorean Girls



Cameras tend to invade people's privacy. In foreign countries where language is a problem, photographers should be even more sensitive to the feelings of the subject. Travel photographs are not complete unless the photographer has captured the human element, whether it be a portrait, candid or documentary photograph. The documentary approach lends itself to all kinds of situations from people in market places to photographs relating to the peoples culture or lifestyles. The documentary approach can be considered easier to photograph, as it can include more of the surroundings and less pressure is placed on the subject as well as the photographer.

Since the eyes have been accurately called the mirror of the soul, capturing them will reveal the strongest part of the subjects visual personality. It is therefore important that the eyes be in focus in the picture. This eye contact is important. The subjects expression and personality take on a new identity.

If the photographer has a choice between photographing in the shade or in direct hot sunlight; the advantages of the shade should be taken. Shade will reduce the glare of the sun and prevent the subject from squinting. Open shade gives even diffuse light which is ideal for informal portraits. More detail will also be visible around the eyes, and the skin tones will be more subtle and softer. The subject is also normally more comfortable in the shade and this will be apparent in the result. If shade is not available avoid harsh overhead lighting, it produces dark sharp shadows. Late afternoon side lighting is good for faces, it models the face and brings out the textures creating mood. Overcast skies are ideal for photographing faces. Since the light is diffused it results in even lighting.

The most vibrant and realistic portraits are often candid, where the photographer has captured a moment without the subjects knowledge.

The easiest way to obtain a candid shot, is making use of a long focus lens,<sup>2</sup> which will enable the photographer to take the photograph from a distance. The



shallow depth of field<sup>3</sup> of a long lens will assist in isolating the subject from a distracting background. Concealed vantage points are another way of obtaining candid either from balconies or may be a lower vantage point. People very seldom notice things above or below them.

Some portraits are impossible to take without the subject noticing the photographers presence. Where this is the case, it is normally a good idea to ask the subjects permission before shooting, unless the photographer is prepared to make a run for it. Being courteous and smiling can get a photographer a long way. There are times, however when the person genuinely does not want to be photographed. The persons wishes should be respected. This occurs more in the primitive people who have all sorts of taboos regarding a camera.

People constantly form into groups for many reasons. When photographing any group, the photographer should show why it exists, otherwise the picture will have little meaning. Wide angle lenses<sup>4</sup> will get more people into a frame while telephotos<sup>5</sup> flatten and compress a crowd. The problem with posed group portraits are they are often stiff and awkward. It is extremely difficult to get the correct expression or action for a group simultaneously.

Often the poorer people require money before posing for a photograph. It is the photographers decision whether he feels right about this.

The main difference between people photographs and travel photographs of people is their clothing and surroundings, that sets them apart as dwellers in foreign lands.

"Both diversity and universality characterize the human race - and whichever trait the travel photographer chooses to emphasize when he photographs people, he will have good authority on this side. Henri Cartier-Bresson once said of his own attitude toward the people he photographs: "By no means do I believe that 'Man is the same all over the world'. Chinese and a European have no more in

common than the fact that they both have a gender and they both eat and sleep!" Edward Steichen had another view: writing about the famous "Family of Man" Exhibit he assembled that consisted of pictures of people from all over the world, he said it was meant to be a "mirror of the essential oneness of mankind."<sup>6</sup>

## ARCHITECTURE

Travel photography would not be complete without architecture. All towns and cities are made up of buildings, and in order to get the feel of a city, it is necessary to photograph its architecture.

Architecture can have great impact on the photographer. Many cities are famous for their architecture, like the Eiffel Tower is to Paris so St Peters cathedral is to Rome. Ancient buildings designed and created by men may have taken generations to construct, but photographers have the opportunity to record them with their cameras in a split second.

In order to photograph architecture successfully, patience and the right equipment is needed. Travel photographers can make use of a simple approach, by using a 35mm camera with through the lens focusing, and still produce successful photographs.

There are some basic rules in photographing linear structures; although it is possible to break these rules, it is still important to bear them in mind.

When a photographer tilts his camera in order to get the top of a building in the frame, linear distortion is created. This results in an appearance of the building falling over. In order to reduce this distortion the camera should be held parallel to the building's vertical plane, but this can result in the top of the building being cut off. Distortion however can give a dramatic feel to the building.<sup>7</sup>



Fig 10

G.R. l'Ons: Architecture: Mitsomiouli Comores



The viewpoint is the most important part of selecting an architectural study. It is common practice to first walk around the building exploring all the possible viewpoints before selecting one. Another choice the photographer has; is selecting whether to make use of a vertical or horizontal frame. It is normally a good idea to make use of both and judge the results afterwards. Buildings such as cathedrals can also be shot from distant views using a long telephoto lens.

Time of day plays another important role in capturing architecture. When the photographer has sufficient time, the building being photographed should be visited during different times of the day. The changing quality of daylight can alter the mood and appearance of a building.

When the overall shape of the building is important, an overcast day can often show this element better than harsh sunlight. Soft misty light can create an atmosphere and enhance the mood. Direct sunlight can produce strong contrasts that will emphasize geometric patterns. A problem that could be encountered when photographing buildings in a city is strong shadows on the desired building, created from other nearby buildings. Strong sunlight increases these shadows. Early morning or late afternoon light can give golden reflections on windows and give the building a warm glow.

Artificial lighting at night can create a new appearance of the building. It can create a visual drama and helps isolate a building, from its surroundings. Tungsten film<sup>8</sup> will correct most colour casts of tungsten lighting, although dramatic effects can be achieved by making use of daylight film<sup>9</sup> and therefore increasing colour casts. Tripods<sup>10</sup> are essential for shooting at night as long exposures are sometimes needed.

Scale can be achieved by placing a small element in the picture. The human figure is a good example, mainly because it is easier to judge scale by measuring in terms of human size.





Fig 11 G.R. I'Ons: Nature: Trees Roots

Making use of frames in architecture can enhance a picture. It can be used to indicate depth or to obscure unwanted details or merely to create a more striking composition. By setting the camera to a small aperture<sup>11</sup> for good depth of field, there will also be many possibilities, windows, arches and doorways can create interesting borders. Natural features such as foliage or trees can create a feeling of nature in the picture.

The silhouette can sometimes reveal more about the structure than if it were lit from the front. The easiest way of creating a silhouette is by framing it against a bright sky. Overcast sky usually creates a gray uninteresting picture.

This result can also be achieved by shooting directly into the sun.

Photographing architecture is essential in giving an accurate description of many far away places, and play an important role in travel photography.

## NATURE

Nature photography covers a vast range of subjects from panoramic landscapes to a single leaf. All these elements in nature fit into this category including wildlife and even underwater photography.

When combining nature with travel photography the result is capturing some of the natural elements of the country visited. This depends largely on where the photographer is travelling. If the photographer was to go on a safari in Kenya, wildlife would play an important role, whereas a trip to Europe might result in photographing local flora. The purpose of making use of nature in travel photography is to demonstrate that every place has some form of natural elements, and this adds another dimension to travel photography .

When photographing flora, the choices are unlimited. Flowers are probably the most popular of all nature subjects. Flowers are colourful and are easily

encountered. There are a wide variety of wild plants which will bloom at different times of the year. The biggest problem with photographing flowers is the choice of lens. A macro lens is ideal for capturing the delicate petals of a flower. If the photographer does not have a macro lens among his equipment, close up filters can also be used. The best time to photograph flowers is in the early morning when plants are still refreshed and dew is sometimes still present. The main problem with photographing flowers and plants is the movement caused by wind, another reason for early morning shoots, morning is the calmest time of day.

Trees are among the most striking objects in nature. Change of seasons are well represented in nature. The travel photographer can make use of these elements to enhance the travel photograph. If the feeling of spring is wanted, blooming fruit trees will achieve this. Huge palm trees can give a tropical feel. By selecting elements in nature the photographers is able to convey a feeling of natural beauty of the place.

## **DETAILS AND CLOSE-UPS**

Details in travel photography can be used in any of the categories already discussed. Whether it be detail of a sequined jacket or a close-up view of a brass door handle. The use of vibrant colours play an important role in detail work. Combinations of bright colours can lend itself to interesting images. Market places with its bright colours and interesting wares can provide infinite opportunities for details. Architecture also lends itself well for close-ups, closing in on small elements of a building can reveal a lot about the style of a building. In extreme close-ups, structural details sometimes become bold abstracts.

Macro lenses<sup>12</sup> are ideal for extreme close-up work, however isolating a detail can sometimes be achieved with a long lens.



Travel photographs should always be looking for subjects which could create interesting details.





Fig 12

G.R. I'Ons: Detail: Baskets.

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# **CHAPTER FOUR**

## **PROBLEMS OF TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY**

Many decisions have to be made before embarking on a journey in order to obtain the best possible travel photographs.

Depending on what passport the traveller holds, visas might have to be arranged. This can normally be done through a travel agent. Adequate time must be given in order to obtain the visas. Innoculations may also be necessary, when visiting certain areas. Research into the proposed country is essential. Travellers cheques should also be arranged before the time. It is advisable to take a small amount of currency of the country the traveller intends to visit first, the reason for this is it may not be possible to exchange travellers cheques on arrival and this could cause problems.

## **CHOICE OF EQUIPMENT**

The choice of equipment is one of the most important decisions the traveller will have to make. The easiest format for extensive travelling is undoubtedly the 35mm format. It is light weight and produces acceptable quality. The single lens reflex<sup>1</sup> (SLR) camera allows the photographer to view and focus through the lens. This enables the photographer to see exactly what he is photographing.

Two camera bodies are advisable, one to be used as a back-up, or for making use of another choice of film.

The more manual cameras are preferred to fully automatic cameras, especially if the photographer is traveling to remote or primitive areas where camera shops are non existent. It is important to have a exposure meter; either a built in type or a hand held meter. As space is limited, built in meters generally are adequate. It is important to take spare batteries for the exposure meter. It is suggested that two sets of batteries are taken on long journeys. A flash is also recommended.

The choice of lenses are crucial to a successful trip. It is important to take all necessary equipment with, but never to overpack. There are two choices



regarding lenses; either the photographer can take fixed focal length lenses<sup>2</sup> or zoom lenses,<sup>3</sup> or a combination of both, however zoom lenses have a f2.8 maximum aperture, and fixed lenses larger apertures are possible.

Fewer lenses are needed when zoom lenses are taken, but some photographers prefer fixed focal length lenses. A wide angle lens<sup>4</sup> is essential for landscape or architecture. Lenses ranging from 20mm - 35mm are suitable. The main advantage of wide angle lenses are its extreme depth of field obtained.<sup>5</sup>

Distortion can be a disadvantage with wide angle lenses, especially with portraits. A standard or 50mm lens is another option. It records a scene with about the same magnification<sup>6</sup> and angle of coverage as the human eye would. An advantage of this lens is its 'speed'<sup>7</sup> making it ideal for low light conditions.

The last choice are telephoto<sup>8</sup> lenses which range from about 75mm to 2000mm in focal length. If the photographer is interested in wildlife and requires photographing wild animals or other subjects, which cannot be photographed from a close distance, a long lens is ideal, however the main disadvantage of this lens, is its bulky and a sturdy tripod is needed. Shorter telephoto lenses, like an 105mm or 135mm are excellent for portraits and can be used without a tripod.

Teleconverters<sup>9</sup> also extend the versatility of a lens, and can double or triple the focal length of the lens, although loss in quality can be experienced.

The photographer should include at least one wide angle lens, a short telephoto lens, and a lens which can be used in low light conditions. It is not necessary to take more than four fixed focus lenses. And it is possible to take only two zoom lenses.

The photographer should also consider a suitable camera bag for the equipment. A big bulky bag is not advised. A well padded smaller bag is recommended. It is a good idea to select a camera bag which doesn't look too 'flashy', or like a typical tourist. This will only be a temptation for thieves. It is important for a

successful travel photographer to blend in to the surroundings where possible. Tripods are bulky items to take with, especially on long trips, perhaps a small table-top tripod is a better option.

## CHOICE OF FILM

The last choice a photographer has to make is the choice of film. Its important for a photographer to decide before embarking on a journey what he requires and what film he intends using.

The various films available are black and white or colour negative film and colour transparency film. For travel colour film is generally preferred, however the option of black and white film should not be ignored. Black and white can produce moody and visually striking photographs.

The choice of film depends on the requirements of the final result.

For photographing in colour the decision lies between colour negative film or colour slide film. Colour negative or print film; offers easier viewing convenience and having prints made from negatives is cheaper, Slides don't offer the same viewing convenience and having prints made is more expensive.

A few comparisons between prints and slides were made:<sup>10</sup>

- (1) Slides have a great deal more life and vitality than the print. The reason being the slide material can cope with a far greater contrast range<sup>11</sup> than a print film.
- (2) Both films are capable of accurate flesh tones.
- (3) Print film has more exposure latitude<sup>12</sup> than slide film. Even with two stops over exposure a print film can still print reasonable photographs, with slide film accurate exposure is needed.



Fig 13

G.R. I'Ons: Landscape: Black and White Infra Red,  
Comores



- (4) Colour casts in print film can be corrected afterwards, whereas with slide film correction filters are needed in the shooting stage, or at the repro stage.
- (5) Prints from slides are expensive, the best method is by printing Cibachromes.<sup>13</sup>

Using an internegative<sup>14</sup> reduces the sharpness of the photograph. The problem with Cibachromes is they can be a little too contrasty sometimes.

The final choice rests with the photographer as both films have their advantages as well as disadvantages.

It is important to take enough fresh film on the trip. It is better to take too much film than not enough; especially if it is not readily available. Film should where possible be stored in a cool; dry place, before and after exposure.

## **AIRPORTS AND DEPARTURES**

All airlines restrict the weight of a travellers luggage as well as the amount of hand luggage permitted. So it is important not to pack too much luggage. Camera equipment leaving the country should be registered before departure. It only takes a few minutes, and can save the photographer lots of problems, when going through customs and on returning home. A copy of the registration form will be kept by the photographer as proof.

The photographer must decide whether his equipment is to be checked in as hold luggage or whether it is to be kept as hand luggage. Remember if your luggage is lost then so is the equipment packed with it. Spare film can always be packed in the travellers suitcase, but exposed film should always be kept at your side.

Hand luggage is normally restricted to one item and should not be too heavy either; remember this has to be carried around on your travels. Hand luggage will have to go through X-ray machines before boarding the aircraft. Generally films under 1000ISO<sup>15</sup> will not be affected. However if the photographer is



travelling to many destinations the film is subject to X-rays at most destinations, it is therefore a lot safer to insist on film being hand inspected. To prevent complications, film should be placed in a see-through plastic bag. Most officials do not see this as a problem. It is not advisable to place film in lead-protected bags as it will appear solid on the X-ray screen and the operator may increase the dose until something becomes visible; subjecting your film to a large amount of radiation.<sup>16</sup>

It is a good idea to board the aircraft as soon as possible. Space for hand luggage is limited in the cabin and it is helpful to have your equipment directly above you, especially if interesting photo possibilities occur during the flight.

Upon arrival in a foreign country, customs can be a problem. The photographer should always ensure that he is neatly dressed and polite, this can save unnecessary time.

It is important for the photographer to be aware of what he may or may not photograph. Most countries have restrictions on certain things. Permission may be needed to photograph certain buildings. Most military buildings are off limits. But it varies from country to country, so it is wise to learn in advance what may not be photographed.<sup>17</sup>

Tourist information offices are nearly always available in first world countries, make use of valuable information to be gained as well as tourist maps to assist the traveller in finding his way.

## TRANSPORT

The major problem with an organised trip or using public transport is that the photographer cannot take photographs whenever he chooses. The bus or train will not stop whenever the photographer sees a potential photograph. Many

opportunities are lost in this regard. The photographer needs time to explore all the photographic possibilities.

Time can be another problem when on an organised trip. Allocated times are permitted at various stops, which are usually not long enough, or the weather conditions might not be suitable. In order to obtain the best travel photographs it is necessary for the photographer to have all the time needed to obtain that special 'shot'.

In order to come back with successful travel photographs, the travel photographer should be aware of the problems that could be encountered.

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## **CHAPTER FIVE**

# **THE SOUTH AFRICAN INFLUENCE**



Travel and travel photography in South Africa are influenced by three factors, magazines and books, television and professional travel photographers.

## **MAGAZINES AND BOOKS**

There are many books available on local travel. Books can be found on game and nature reserves, best hikes in South Africa and even a travellers guide to South Africa. These books instruct and even educate the reader on interesting places to visit, and important sites to view.

"GETAWAY" magazine, is a locally produced travel magazine, which explores and photographs all of Southern Africa's beauty and interesting destinations. It explores resorts from the Drakensberg to Indian ocean islands like Mauritius. It is a monthly magazine and each issue features another destination. The magazine takes on a documentary-like approach and includes in-depth articles on places of adventure with interesting colour photographs. This magazine serves as a useful guide for travellers.

## **TELEVISION**

Television is a widely accessible medium, and reaches a huge audience. many documentary programs on wild-life and their habitat are often shown. This to a certain extent will influence travellers, especially wild life photographers.

The introduction of 'Bon Voyage', a locally produced travel programme has certainly influenced and persuaded potential travellers to experience the world for themselves. Each episode; is hosted by a presenter, who travels to a different exotic location, and explores various places worth visiting. This programme is generally aimed at the tourist photographer; although the photographer has the



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Fig. 14

Cover of *Getaway Magazine*  
November 1991; volume 3; number 8

freedom to explore the location as much as desired. The main aim of the programme is to give the traveller a 'taste' of the possibilities awaiting him.

## PHOTOGRAPHERS

A predominant travel photographer in South Africa is Obie Oberholzer. He has produced three major books about his travels around Southern Africa. "Ariesfontein to Zuurfontein" was his first book, followed by "Southern Circle" and finally "To Hell 'n Gone".

All three books have taken Obie Oberholzer on extensive journeys around Southern Africa. His subjects range from vibrant landscapes to portraits of interesting people.

Oberholzer works with medium format cameras, and uses Pentax 6x7 cameras. He has a selection of lenses ranging from a wide angle 55mm to a telephoto 400mm lens. He does not use a standard lens because he feels it is "like standing on your two legs and looking straight ahead".<sup>1</sup>

Obie always uses a tripod and makes use of a Metz 60 Flash and sometimes uses a bright torch for painting with light.

He works exclusively with Agfa negative roll film and prints all his photographs himself. He manipulates his images in the darkroom to obtain the desired effect. Overall control is important and he feels if you cannot control your technique you'll never rise to great heights.<sup>2</sup>

"Photography is an excuse for me to travel, to go to unknown places. It is an excuse to adventure because life without adventure is no life at all."<sup>3</sup>

Herman Potgieter is another local photographer who has produced interesting travel photographs. His book "South Africa, Landshapes, Landscapes, Manscapes" show fresh perspective of the South African country side.





Fig 15

Vegetable farmer, Zambezi escarpment, Zimbabwe  
Oberholzer O. Southern Circle.



Most of his photographs were taken from an aerial viewpoint. He has used a fresh approach to photographing the land. Many of his pictures are glimpses of a huge ecological revolution, brought about by man, with his ploughs and planting.<sup>4</sup> His photographs reflect the patterns created by man and nature. Most of his photographs are taken in the early morning or late afternoon or evening.

Most of Potgieters Landshapes are taken from the air. Some are of natural formations, but most of the photographs show man's influence on the land, in the form of patterns created by man.<sup>5</sup> His landscapes are less abstract and their aim is to evoke emotion in the viewer. The forms and moods of nature are evident in his photographs.<sup>6</sup>

The manscapes show man's power to dominate nature. Some of the photographs show industrial and urban scapes, others include natural forms.<sup>7</sup>

Other books by Herman Potgieter include "Aviation in South Africa (1986)" and "Okavango from the Air" (1989).



Fig. 16 Wheatfields and trees near Mamre,  
South-western Cape Province.....  
Potgieter H. South Africa,  
Landshapes, Landscapes, Manscapes

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# **CHAPTER SIX**

## **PERSONAL DIARIES**





Fig 17 Europe: Outline of Authors route  
© Central University of Technology, Free State

Many journeys were taken by the author, to obtain a diverse range of travel photographs. Local as well as overseas trips were undertaken. Local trips included popular tourist resorts like Durban and Port Elizabeth. Two overseas trips were also included. The first overseas trip was an extended journey of Europe and the second trip was an exploration of the island of Grande Comore.

## EUROPE

The trip through Europe lasted four months, and the author travelled alone, with a backpack and camera.

The equipment consisted of a Nikon FE 2 body as well as three lenses. A 35-75 Zoom lens, a 28mm lens and a 50mm lens. A small flash, polarizing filter, blower brush and lens cleaning tissue were also taken. The equipment was packed into a small camera bag. Spare camera and flash batteries were included. The author decided to use slide film exclusively. A few rolls of 36 Exposure Fujichrome;<sup>1</sup> colour transparency 100ISO film were included. The rest of the film was purchased in Europe.

Extensive research on Europe had been done prior to the journey. The author had decided on certain places to be visited. However a rigid timetable was not observed.

## SWITZERLAND

The journey began in Zürich, the bankers town of Europe. Zürich is positioned on the northern tip of the *Zürichsee* (lake) with the River Limmat dividing it into two parts.<sup>2</sup>

All the research done had not prepared the author for the beauty of Switzerland. Thick mist and rain were to greet the author in Zürich. The rain continued the



following day, which encouraged the author to begin his travels. Public transportation was used to travel around Europe.

Lucerne was the next Swiss city visited. Situated on lake Lucerne this beautiful city has many coloured wall paintings an art form which flourished in the late sixteenth century.<sup>3</sup> The weather was no better than in Zürich. Thick clouds hung over the city. Only a few photographs were taken as the author was not prepared for the weather. Lugano was the last Swiss city to be explored before departing for Italy. Lugano is situated on the border between Switzerland and Italy.

There was a complete change in weather conditions on arrival in Lugano. The temperature on arrival was 35 degrees centigrade. The warm, sunny conditions encouraged the photographer to explore the city with enthusiasm. Many photographs were taken in this city. The beauty of the surroundings overwhelmed the author and far to many similar photographs were taken. Four days were spent in Lugano before departing for Italy.

## ITALY

The contrast in the landscape and efficiency, between Switzerland and Italy is apparent as one travels south.

Three weeks were spent in Italy, exploring large cities and popular tourist sites as well as smaller towns. The first of these towns is Ferrara. This town has much history and in the centre of the town is the towered and turreted *Castello*, a reminder of the despotic *D'Este* dukes who ruled from 1294 to 1598.<sup>4</sup> Three days were spent exploring the town and surrounding area. The weather was to remain extremely hot for the following month. This resulted in most photographs been taken either in the morning or late afternoon, as it become extremely hot at midday.

The language barrier proved to be a problem in the smaller towns and sign language was largely used to be understood. Youth hostels and small hotels were mainly used for accommodation.

Padova was the following city to be explored. The author chose Padova as a base and took day trips to Venice, which was only a half an hour trip by train. The main reason for doing this was that Venice was 'overflowing' with tourists and accommodation was a major problem.

Venice is a travel photographer's dream come true and nightmare in one. The photographic possibilities are endless, with hundreds of tiny bridges and twisting canals, the problem is the mass of tourists who make it extremely difficult to capture the essence of Venice without a mass of people ruining the beauty. It is advisable to visit this city out of high tourist season.

The coastal town of Ravenna was next to be visited. Here the photographer ran out of film and suitable substitutes were not available. The photographer learnt his lesson, and made sure he was always well stocked with film after that incident.

Florence and Rome were the following cities to be explored.

The biggest advantage to travelling alone is being able to spend as much or as little time at various places. This is a major disadvantage of going on an organised tour.

The huge dome of the Cathedral of *Santa Maria del Fiore* dominates the city of Florence. The construction of this beautiful cathedral started in 1296 and took almost 200 years to complete.<sup>5</sup>

The author had problems trying to photograph this cathedral, because of its size, different approaches were attempted, from a distant view to a close up. The close up worked the best as it had an abstract feel, unlike all the other pictures





Fig 18 G.R. I'Ons: Florence "Santa Maria del Fiore"  
Cathedral

taken. Florence also houses one of the finest art collections in the world, and much time was spent admiring the works of art.

The journey then continued to Rome, the eternal city. Much time was spent exploring this ancient city. From Rome the Author travelled south to the port of Brindisi, where a Greek ferry, the *Ionis* was boarded. Nearly two days were spent in the Mediterranean, stopping at tiny Greek Islands until the ferry docked at Patra on the Mainland of Greece.

A three hour bus trip was then taken to reach Athens. The heat in Greece was unbearable. Athens was a great disappointment. The city is dirty and dusty. A week was spent in Athens and its surrounding coast line.

The author decided it would be easier to fly back to Rome than another three days of buses, trains and ferry rides. And within an hour the author was back in Rome. That evening was spent in Rome and the journey was continued to Verona the following morning.

Verona is the town where William Shakespeare set 'Romeo and Juliet.'<sup>6</sup> Two days were spent in a fifteenth century villa overlooking this beautiful town.

## AUSTRIA

The following country visited was Austria. Three cities were photographed: Innsbruck; Salzburg and Vienna.

Innsbruck is a charming small city surrounded by snow capped mountains. The icy water of the Inn river flows through the city.<sup>7</sup> The surrounding country side was also photographed and many interesting landscapes were taken.

The journey continued to Salzburg, the home of Mozart, and then to Vienna.



Fig. 19 G.R. I'Ons: Innsbruck: Landscape



## GERMANY

From Austria the journey continued to Germany. München was the first German city visited. It is the capital of Bavaria and one of Germany's wealthiest cities.<sup>8</sup> Accommodation was a problem in München, and the only accommodation found was in a renovated castle a half an hours train ride from the city. The castle was built on a hill with sweeping view's of the valley and river below, and all worth the trip. The 1977 Olympic Stadium in München, with its futuristic design was photographed.

The author then travelled north to Stuttgart, the home or Porsche motor cars.

The best part of Germany was exploring the Rhinelands. The town of Koblenz was the most interesting, and the accommodation took the form a a fortress situated on a steep hill overlooking the town. One of the author's favourite city scapes was taken from the fortress at sunset. A tripod was needed for this photograph, but it was not included in the equipment, so the photographer had to make do with balancing the camera on a wide wall. This was one of the few occasions when a tripod would have come in handy.

The journey through Germany's ended in *Köln* (Cologne), the fourth largest west German city, which was nearly destroyed during the second world war. The city is famous for its cathedral, the *Kölner Dom*. The cathedral was begun in 1248 and completed only in 1880.<sup>9</sup>

The weather was cold and rainy and grey, which prevented the author from exploring the city to its fullest.

Amsterdam was the next stop. This was to be the only city to be visited in Holland, and a week was spent in this charming city. The weather had cleared up and it was sunny for most of the week. The city has many tree-lined canals and interesting boat houses along the canals. The city was explored with a renewed enthusiasm and many photographs were taken. The city comes alive at





Fig. 20 G.R. I'Ons: Koblenz: Cityscape

night and the many bridges crossing the canals, are all lit with 'fairy lights'. The centre of the city is small and easy to explore on foot or, on one of the many passing trams.

A bus was taken from Amsterdam to London. The bus drove onto the ferry at the channel crossing, and a few hours were spent crossing the English channel until landing in Dover on the English coast.

The longest duration of time was spent in London, exploring this huge city, its parks and famous sites.

All the exposed film was also taken to a processing laboratory for processing and mounting. This enabled the photographer to assess what the results looked like, and prevented the exposed film from any fogging or damage. The slides were placed in dust proof containers, where no damage could occur.

A base was kept in London, so all excess luggage and the processed slides were kept in one place for the duration of the stay in Great Britain.

Scotland was then explored, with most of the stay spent in Edinburgh. Day trips were taken to places such as St Andrews, famous for its golf course. Stirling and Perth were also explored. A return journey was made to London, where all belongings were collected.

The final leg of the journey was to Paris, where a week was spent. The weather in Paris was rainy and cold and made the city look very grey and dull. To make matters worse, the Paris underground train, the Metro, was on strike and most destinations had to be reached by foot. Accommodation was found on the left bank, in a charming family hotel. The photographs taken during the day were disappointing, but the author had few expectations, however the photographs of Paris at night were more striking and successful.

The journey ended back in Zürich, which was still covered in rain, it seemed like it never stops raining in this city.

## CONCLUSION

One of the problems encountered on the journey was the complete change in weather conditions. It was sometimes impossible to capture the type of image the author had in mind when the weather conditions were not as expected. One has no control over the weather and sometimes alternative ideas had to be used.

The 50mm lens was not essential, except for low light conditions. It was seldom used. The author could have done with a wider, wide angle lens, maybe a 20mm or a 24mm lens. The 28mm lens was useful but, too close to the 35mm used on the zoom lens.

The problem with using slide film is having the slides printed. The author attempted printing Cibachromes, but the quality obtained was not up to expectations.

Although four months were spent in Europe, too many places were visited and not enough time was spent in a particular place, which is essential in order to capture the true reflection of the place.

## THE COMORES

The second overseas trip undertaken by the author was to the Islands of the Comores, which consist of four islands. The island of Mayotte remained under French rule, while the other three islands voted for independence, and are self governed. The official title of these three islands is the federal Islamic Republic of The Comores.<sup>10</sup> The island of the Grande Comore was chosen for the authors adventure. The island is small in size, measuring 1148 square kilometres. It is 71 kilometres long and 34 kilometres wide, at its widest point. The Grande Comore is the youngest of the four islands and contains one of the worlds largest active volcano's called Mount Karthala. The last eruption occurred in 1977.<sup>11</sup>

The islands are also called the Perfume or Spice isles. A week was spent exploring this beautiful tropical island. The island is very primitive and unspoilt. Because of the size of the island many short journeys were undertaken.

The hotel where the author stayed offered arranged day trips around the island, but such trips were generally avoided.

Firstly due to all the hotel tourists creating a disturbance among the locals, and secondly the bus would only stop at the tourist spots.

On arrival, the author met a local who had a motor vehicle and served as tour guide. His prices were reasonable and the author arranged his first trip for the day after arrival. The advantage of a local tour guide was that he knew the island and was able to take the author to places seldom seen by the average tourist. The first trip was a full day trip' covering most of the coast of the island. Many shorter trips were also undertaken, some on foot to nearby villages. The landscape is tropical and lush, which lends itself to interesting landscapes. The island is extremely humid and thick thunder clouds were often present, creating a strong mood which was exaggerated by using a polarizing filter.<sup>12</sup>



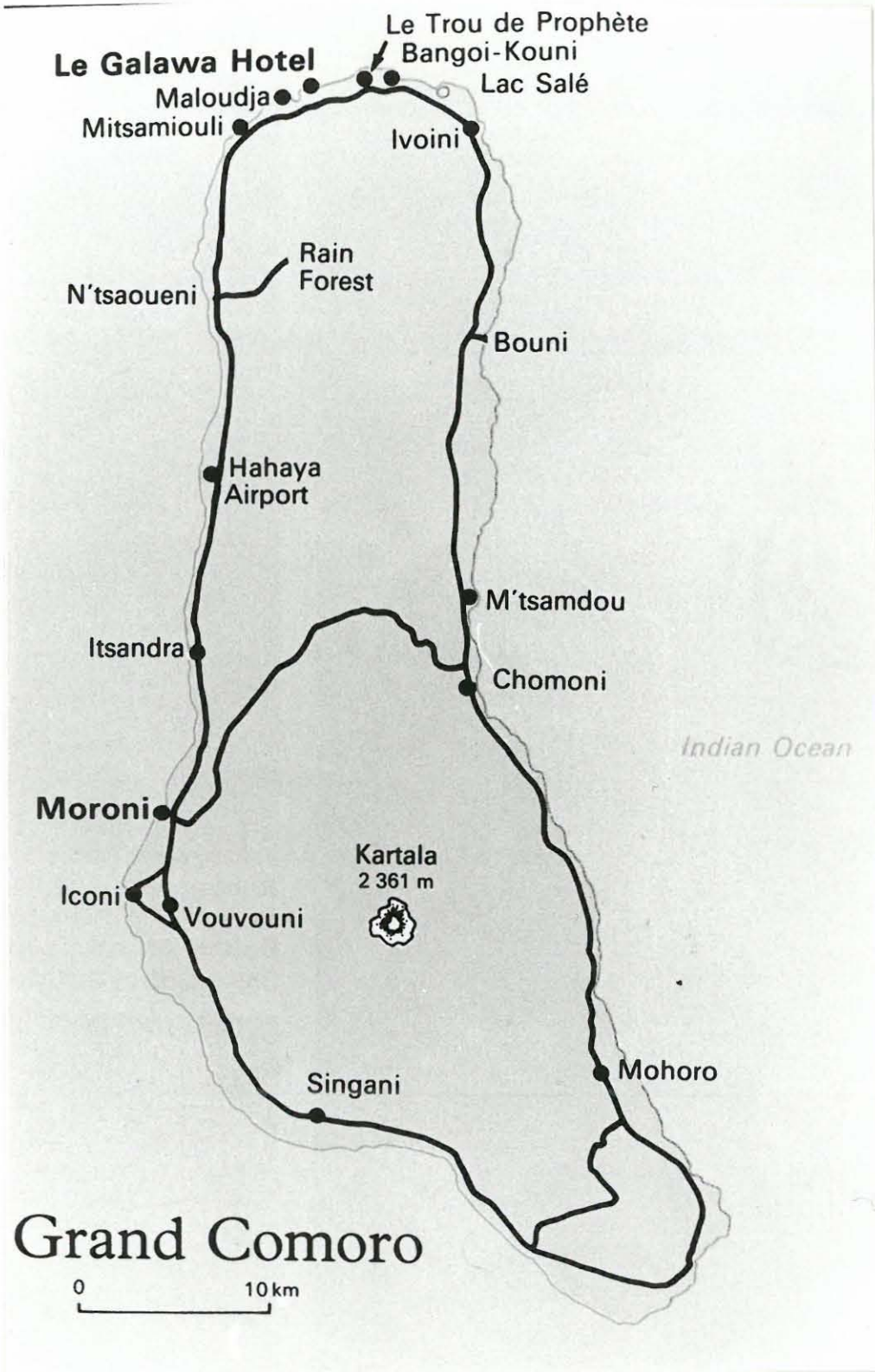


Fig. 21 Grande Comore: Outline of Authors route

The author spent a day exploring the capital; Moroni, where many interesting photographs were taken. The city has many narrow alleyways and tiny shops. The market place was an experience; where fruit, vegetables; spices, meat and fish could be purchased.

The meat and fish were covered in flies and certainly looked unhygienic. The biggest problem encountered on this trip was photographing the people, especially the women. Their religion being Moslem, most women wear scarf-like *lessos* for instant veiling. They tend to have a great dislike for a camera and just pointing it in their direction caused a great fuss. Even trying to persuade some of them with money didn't help. On one occasion in the market; oranges and verbal abuse were hurled at the author trying to photograph some women selling fruit. After that incident the author tried not to invade their privacy, however it was not easy to capture the essence of a traditional market without photographing the people in it.

Another problem encountered was weather conditions. While exploring the harbour in Moroni, the sky became overcast and dull. There were endless photographic possibilities, but the light was not right and the author spent a few hours waiting; but with no results. It was not possible to return to this site. That is probably the biggest problem with travel photography. It is important to choose a time of year which will result in the best weather conditions.

Enough spare film was always taken on trips. When the author went on hiking trips, only one camera body was taken. When strolling through villages, it was important to keep the camera hidden until an interesting possibility arose. The sight of a camera seemed to upset most of the people.

The most fruitful trip taken was to Chomoni on the eastern side of the island. The beach consisted of small white and black pebbles and the blue ocean, in the



Fig 22      Boats and Friday mosque  
Moroni harbour, Comores



distance was a huge baobab tree. Some of the author's best work was done on this beach.

## EQUIPMENT

The decision, on what equipment to include was a lot easier, as the photographer would not be carrying all his equipment with him all the time. A large camera bag was taken as well as a small one for day trips. The equipment consisted of two Nikon bodies a FE2 and a F301. Lenses included a 28mm lens and a 35-75mm zoom lens. A blower brush and a selection of filters were also taken. Spare batteries for the cameras and flash were also included as they were extremely expensive and not readily available on the island.

A tripod was also taken. The author decided on colour print film. Enough Fujicolor 100ISO HR II<sup>13</sup> and Fuji Color Reala<sup>14</sup> was taken. Kodak black and white infra red film<sup>15</sup> was also included for experimenting with.

Most photographs were taken during the morning or late afternoon, as the heat during midday was extreme. All film was stored in a cooler bag in the hotel room.

## CONCLUSION

The author felt that two camera bodies were helpful, especially when colour as well as black and white photographs were taken. However two cameras tend to be bulky, especially on long walks and twice the responsibility. The tripod was seldom used because of the bright light conditions and was left in the room most of the trip. The only filter worth taking was the polarizing filter; it was almost a fixture on the lens and enhanced the landscapes, and got rid of unwanted glare, especially on the water. The red filter was needed only for the black and white



infra red photographs. Both lenses were used, and necessary with two camera bodies.

Most of the film was used but it was advisable to take more film than needed, because it was difficult to predict the amount of film that would be used, as quality film is unobtainable on the island.

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- 7 FODOR (1988) *Austria* p 248
- 8 GIBSON, I. (1988) *Lets Go Europe* p 310
- 9 Ibid., p 291
- 10 *Getaway* May 1991 Volume 3 Number 2 p 41
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 See Glossary p 133
- 13 See Glossary p 131
- 14 See Glossary p 131
- 15 See Glossary p 131

# **CHAPTER SEVEN**

## **AUTHORS WORK**



Fig 23      Boats with ropes  
Moroni harbour, Comores  
© Central University of Technology, Free State



## **HARBOUR: MORONI**

A full day was spent exploring Moroni, the capital of the Comores. Much of that time was spent at the old harbour. The author noticed old wooden fishing boats on the water. The boats were broken down and looked really interesting. Many photographs from different angles were taken. First the author tried to isolate the boats in the water and Figure 23 was the result. The stretched out ropes leading the viewer into the picture create strong, simple lines which lead the viewers eyes to the boats. The small bit of harbour wall on the right hand corner of the frame ties the ropes to the land, without it, the ropes would seem to be floating to nowhere. The other photographs used are the boats and the white mosque in the background; Figure 22. The broken dawn boats in the foreground, tend to contrast well against the whiteness of the Friday Mosque.<sup>1</sup> The largest of all the mosques found on the Grande Comore. The human element in the photograph suggests scale and gives a feeling of movement. The biggest problem while at the harbour was the sudden change in weather. The sky became overcast and it started to rain. A few hours were spent waiting for the sky to clear, but it didn't happen and the result was a slightly grey moody effect, however it adds to the mood of the boats and muddy water.

## **VANILLA CROPS (Figure 24)**

While driving around the Grande Comore, the author came across a field with rows of dark-looking pods. The pods were dried vanilla pods. The vanilla is picked and placed in hessian bags, it is then placed in the sun daily to dry out. The rows of vanilla made a interesting subject for photographing. The author attempted to create patterns in the foreground by tightly cropping in the foreground and allowing the background to be out of focus. The photograph also

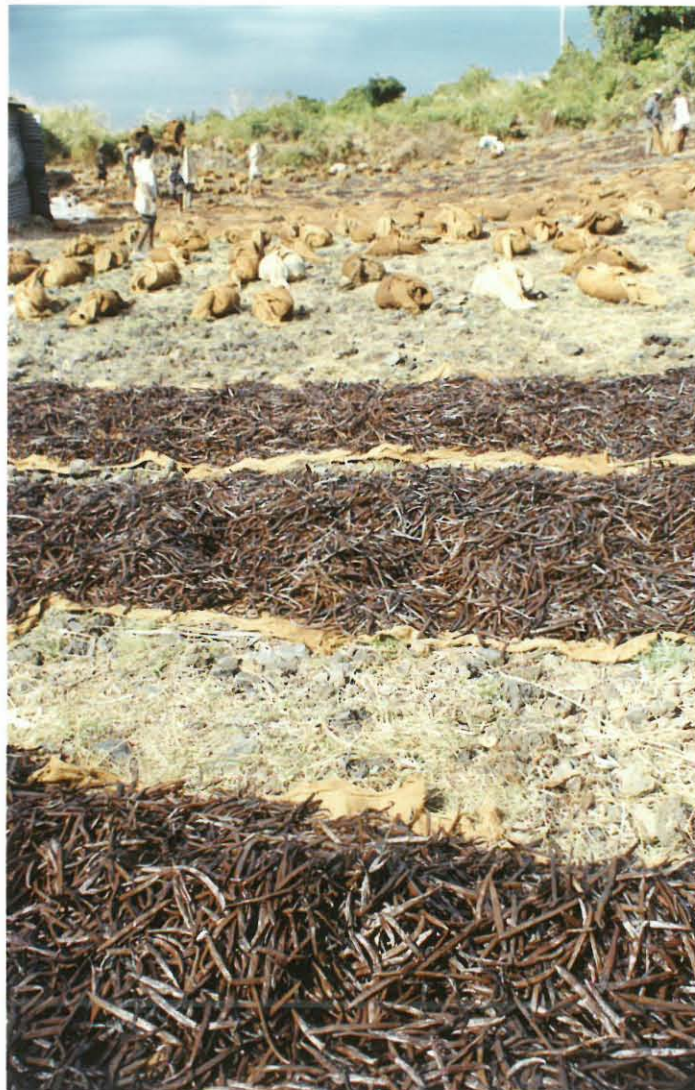


Fig 24 Vanilla Fields; Comores



has a documentary feel, giving the viewer some insight on how vanilla is dried and placed in hessian bags.

## **GALAWA AND OCEAN**

A galawa is a type of canoe carved from a mango tree. The boat is long and extremely narrow with supports on both sides for balance. These canoes are used by the local fisherman. Many months are spent carving and perfecting their galawa's before placing in water.

The author got to know one of the local fisherman; Abdula; he took the author out to sea on his galawa. There is a coral reef close to the coast line so the water is extremely calm and clear. Figure 25 and 26 show close up views of the galawa and the blue ocean. These photographs were taken early in the morning while exploring the surrounding coast line. A polarizing filter was used to reduce the glare. The biggest problem encountered while photographing the galawa was trying to focus on the galawa, making use of the 35-75mm zoom lens which has its closest focusing range at one point two metres. The photographer couldn't move around as desired. As the canoe can tip fairly easily, so the photographs were not easy to take. The spray from the sea water soon misted up the filter, so that had to be cleaned making use of a T-shirt. The author feels these two photographs are successful and have strong impact, mainly because of their simplicity, an abstract part of the galawa in the foreground, contrasted by the blue, clear ocean and a distant unsharp horizon. By placing the horizon towards the top of the frame the emphases falls on the water, which works because of the colour.



Fig. 25 Galawa in Ocean  
Indian Ocean, off Comore Coastline





Fig. 26 Galawa in Ocean,  
Indian Ocean, off Comore Coastline

## THE POOLS

These photographs were taken in Durban around the children's pools on the beach front. The photographs were taken very early in the morning; however, they were taken on separate days. Figure 27 was taken on a very calm morning. The author intended getting a mirror-like reflection on the water. The picture is cropped directly above the pools edge and only the reflected images along the waters edge can be seen. The strong, bold shape and line of the stepping stones made the image exciting. Figure 28 was also taken at the children's pools, except a slightly windy morning was chosen, to give an interesting ripple effect on the water. The author waited until the sun was at exactly the correct spot, before shooting. The sun is placed directly behind the centre circle of the archway. The camera was placed on a tripod for a slightly long exposure. a 28mm lens was used and Fujicolor Reala film.<sup>2</sup>

## TREE TOWARDS SKY (Figure 29)

This photograph was taken in Port Elizabeth, at the top of Albany road. The author was impressed with the unusual tree with interesting creepers growing on it. The colourful houses in the background give the tree a dramatic feel. The angle chosen by the author gives the feeling of a towering plant. The author used a polarizing filter, to darken the blue sky and bring out the bits of white clouds. This photograph was taken with a 28mm lens. The author feels the use of distortion works in this photograph, and the use of colour and saturation make it successful

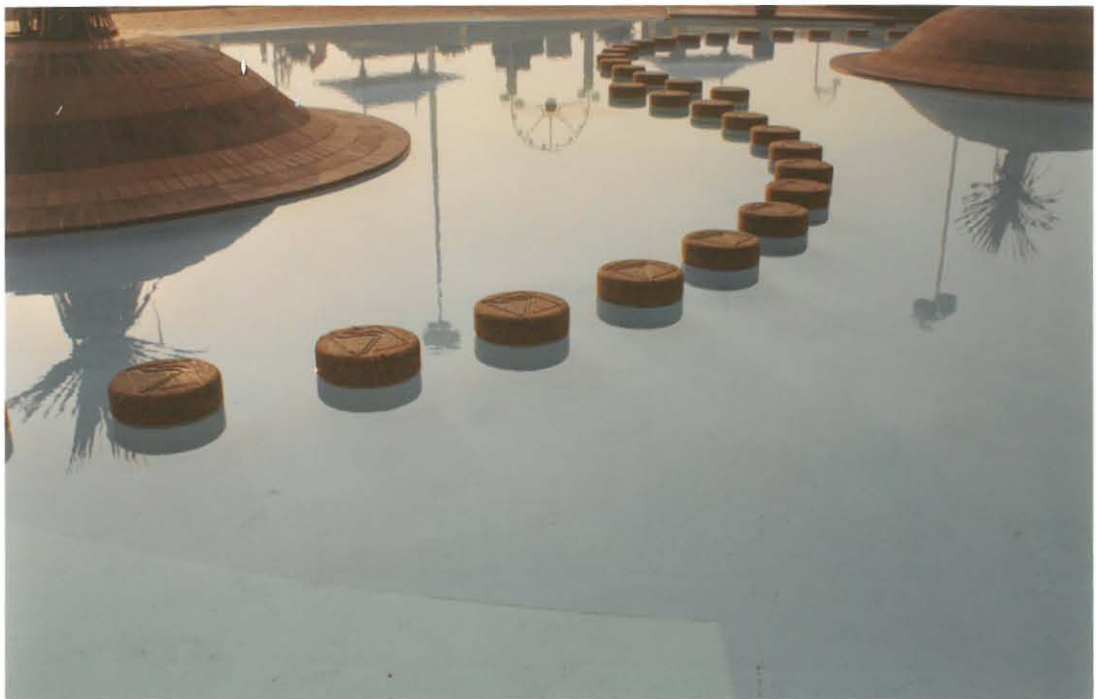


Fig 27      The Pools: Durban.

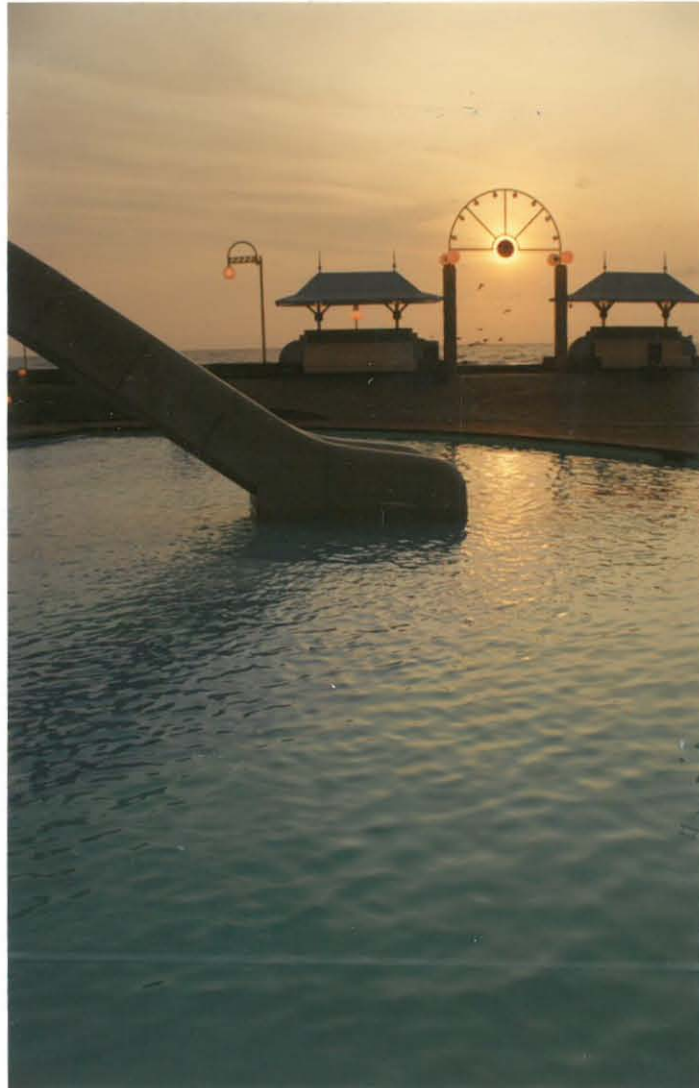


Fig 28      The Pools: Durban



## **CHOMONI BEACH**

This spectacular beach is found on the east side of the Grande Comore. The beach has a huge baobab tree on the south side, which is strange, to see a baobab tree almost at the waters edge. Figure 30 shows the tree clearly. In the foreground is a galawa fishing boat. The use of a polarizing filter darkens the already blue sky and brings out the colours of the water. A 35mm lens was used for this photograph. The composition is pleasing however the picture would have been more successful if a fill in flash was used to put a little more light on the canoe and bring out the texture of the wood.

## **STATUE OF CROSS**

Port Elizabeth city centre has many old restored buildings, many of them have been painted different colours, making interesting subjects. Figure 31 was taken of the old post office building and an interesting cross monument in the foreground.

The angle at which the photograph was taken, gives the cross height, so the viewer almost looks up to it, giving it a symbolic meaning as well. The author attempted many different angles, in which to photograph it, however the one chosen was the most successful. It was shot early in the morning making use of side lighting and taken with a 28mm lens and Fujicolor HR11 100ISO film was used.

## **MODERN SKYSCRAPER**

This rather abstract photograph of a block of flats, was taken in Durban. The strong lines and curves in the foreground, add a strong modern feel to the building, and the building mushrooms out from behind the purple and blue foreground. The author has chosen to include two photographs of the same



Fig 29 Tree towards sky  
Albany Road, Port Elizabeth

building taken from almost exactly the same viewpoint, except the final result gives the photograph a completely different feel. Figure 32 has a far more graphic look to it, and has included the human element, which adds balance and scale to the photograph. Figure 33 on the other hand, has included part of a banana tree which provides the photograph with a tropical feel; tells the viewer something about the vegetation, the place and has a stronger holiday feel about it.

### **SHUTTERS IN THE SUN**

This photograph; figure 34 was taken in Port Elizabeth at sunrise. The photograph has a monochromatic feel, and its success can be attributed to the strong warm reflection's of the shutters and bits of paintwork of the house. The vertical lines on the house which converge to the church steeple in the background lead the viewer into the photograph and finally to the church. The photograph shows a little of the past.

### **THE DONKIN AND LIGHTHOUSE (Figure 35)**

This photograph is of Port Elizabeth's famous Donkin monument, erected by Sir Rufane Donkin in honour of his wife, Elizabeth; hence the name, Port Elizabeth.<sup>3</sup> The author attempted a fresh approach in photographing this unusual stone like pyramid. The author waited for a morning with blue skies and a bit of cloud formation, a polarizing filter was used to darken the blue sky and an unusual angle was chosen, to include the white light house. The result is a balance between old and new architecture.



## MARKETS IN MORONI

Many photographs were taken in Moroni's various markets. The biggest problem encountered was trying to capture the human element. The author was forced to use the candid approach as the people were unwilling to be photographed. Oranges were even thrown at the author while attempting to photograph orange sellers as in Figure 36. The blur of the woman in the middle was achieved by shooting at 1/15 second, a 35mm focal length was used. The camera was hand held. The blur gives a feeling of movement; it shows that the market is busy and alive.

Figure 37 of the red tomatoes, shows a less energetic approach, there is no movement and the photograph relies on the bright colours of the tomatoes and other vegetables. Enough detail has been maintained in the shadow area to get an idea of the market.

The detail photograph of the bean and spice bags was also taken at a sidewalk in Moroni. See Figure 38. This is a good example of making use of detail, in travel photography. The different colours and textures of the various beans framed by the plastic bags creates a dramatic effect. The patterns created by the reoccurring circles of the bags helps in creating a successful photograph.

## BOAT ON PALMED BEACH (Figure 39)

The photograph was taken near the village of *l'Broude* on the northern side of the Grande Comore. Late afternoon light was used. The sky had big clouds present which added to the dramatic feel obtained. The strong sunlight on the boat in the foreground, brings out the carving and colour of the sides of the boat. The author waited until strong sunlight appeared on the boat before photographing. The sun was hidden behind clouds for a long time, but by





Fig 30 Chomoni Beach; Comores

waiting until the right moment, the desired effect was achieved. The author used a 28mm lens at f5.6.

## **INFRA RED**

While in the Comores, the author experimented with black and white infra red film. Making use of the lush vegetation and traditional grass huts, the author managed to achieve some interesting results. Figure 40 is an example of this experimentation. The author used Kodak High speed Infra red black and white negative film. The film was rated at 100 ISO and a red filter was placed in front of the lens. The film was processed in Ilford ID II developer for nineteen minutes at 20 degrees centigrade. The developer was diluted one plus three, normal agitation was given, for the first 30 seconds and then for five seconds every 30 seconds.

## **CONCLUSION**

Many different photographs were taken. Most of the ones chosen were no surprise to the author, previsualisation is very important. It is essential where possible to frame the subject correctly; move the camera while viewing the subject to check out all the alternatives, it is amazing the difference that can be made by adjusting the horizon position; or by including something interesting in the foreground. The author very seldom crops his images while printing, although if necessary will do so.

Most photographs were taken either in the early morning or late afternoon. The author prefers using a wide angle lens. In many of the architectural subjects distortion was used which is achieved by using a wide angle lens. Most of the travel photographs make use of bright, vibrant colours, the author must be

attracted to colours to achieve good results. Many of the photographs have dark, saturated blue skies, the author enjoys working with a polarizer to give the photograph a dramatic feel. Fujicolor film; HR11 and Reala are preferred because of the rich colours obtained. The author also prefers working on a vertical format, as about 70 percent of the images make use of this format.

## REFERENCES AND NOTES

### CHAPTER SEVEN

- 1 Alexander, D. (1976) *Holiday in the Islands* p 14
- 2 See Glossary p 131
- 3 JOYCE, P. (1991) *Travellers Guide to South Africa* p 196





Fig 31      Statue of Cross  
City Centre; Port Elizabeth



Fig 32 Modern sky scraper  
Marine Parade; Durban



Fig 33 Modern sky scraper.....  
Marine Parade; Durban



Fig. 34      Shutters in the sun  
Central; Port Elizabeth





Fig. 35      The Donkin and Lighthouse  
City Centre; Port Elizabeth



Fig. 36      Orange sellers  
Moroni market, Comores



Fig 37      Red tomatoes  
Moroni market, Comores





Fig 38      Beans and Spices  
Moroni, Street, Comores





Fig. 39      Boat on palmed beach  
I'brude; Comores



Fig 40      Grass huts  
              Infra Red, Comores



Fig 41 Isandra: Comores





Fig 42

Arab Sign, Moroni; Comores





Fig 43      Graphic Building: Durban



Fig 44      Giant Baobab Tree  
Comores



Fig. 45      Washing on Line, Comores



Fig. 46      Central Cottages  
Port Elizabeth





Fig. 47      View From house;  
Comores



Fig. 48      Hollow tree and boy  
Comores



Fig. 49      Basket making  
Comores





Fig. 49      Basket making  
Comores





Fig. 50      Abstract Trees  
Comores



Fig 51      Man at stall  
Comores



Fig. 52      Spice Sellers  
Comores





Fig. 53      Old Man in Alley  
Moroni Comores





Fig. 54      Bird houses  
Comores



Fig. 55      Lights at Dawn  
Durban

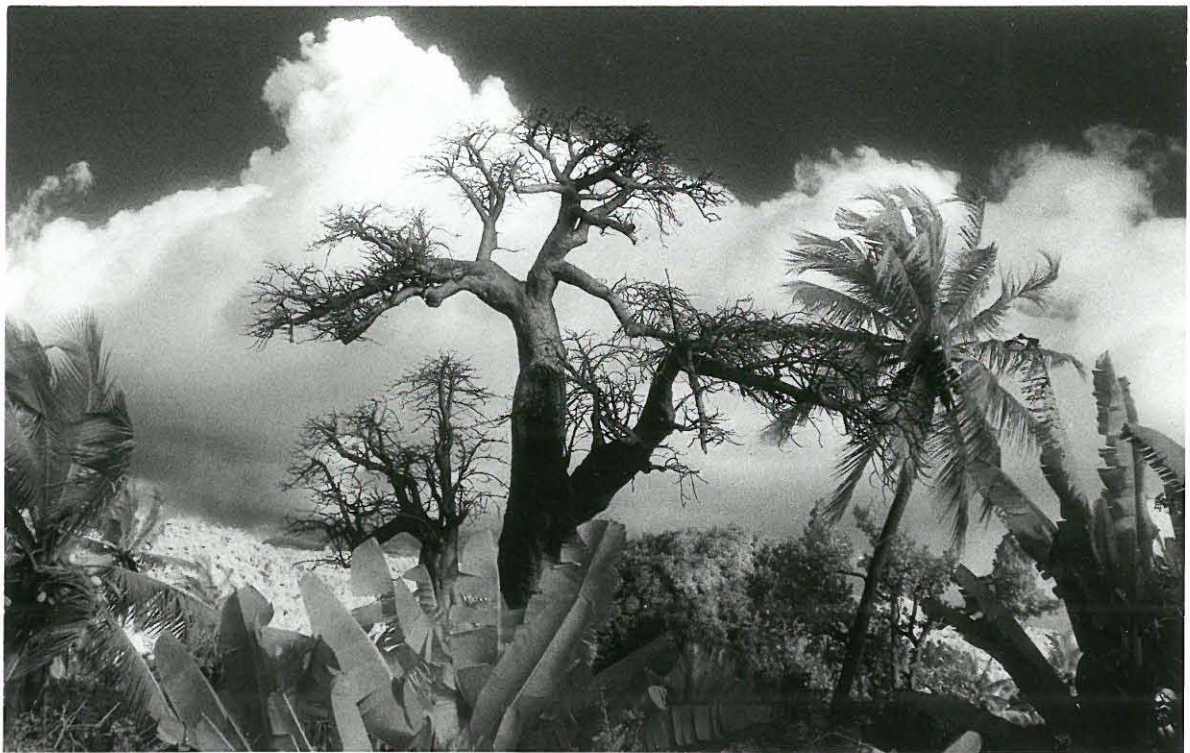


Fig. 56      Landscape Black and White  
                 Infra red, Comores





Fig. 57      Traditional Comorian Wedding



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE FUTURE OF TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY

*"Without change, there is no progress,  
No matter how successful we are today,  
We must change to develop for tomorrow".*

Michihiro Yamaki,  
President of Sigma Corporation, Japan

Many changes have occurred in photography in the last hundred years. From the invention of the first Kodak camera by George Eastman in 1888, photography has been made available to everyone.

The travel photographer now has a vast choice, with regards to equipment, ranging from simple single lens reflex cameras to fully automatic compact cameras and even video cameras.

Video is certainly here to stay and has found itself a place in the market. Video cameras are becoming lighter and more compact; and easier to operate. many tourists are now making use of this medium. The introduction of the still video camera is still under debate. The quality obtained is not up to standard in comparison with photographs on the printed page.<sup>1</sup>

Tourism is becoming a bigger business every year. More people are travelling each year, and the demand for photography will continue to be there as long as there are places to visit. Photographic magazines are even offering photographic holiday trips, ranging from photographic safari's to Africa to photo adventures in Nepal.<sup>2</sup>

The tourist photographer is not concerned with complicated equipment, his main aim is to document the places visited. The invention of the modern compact autofocus camera has made it extremely easy to obtain 'good' photographs, simply by pressing the button. The camera today is really an imagemaking computer. It thinks, it calculates, it estimates, it evaluates; it computes, and then it is done a lot faster and a lot more accurately than even a reasonably efficient photographer managed ten or fifteen years ago.<sup>3</sup>

Black and white photography has very little future with regards to travel photography; with the exception of a few professionals. Colour films have got better and better and one-hour photo laboratories have become as common as the corner store.

The travel photographer of the future will make use of far more sophisticated equipment; yet easier to use. Video will also play an important role in the future of travel photography. As long as there are foreign lands and cultures to explore, the travel photographer will exist.

## REFERENCES AND NOTES

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- 1      *Practical Photography* June 1990 p 50
- 2      *Practical Photography* June 1990 p 50
- 3      *Profoto* April 1990 Volume Seven Number four p 10



## CHAPTER NINE

### CONCLUSION

*"The photographer must have, and keep in him, some of the receptiveness of the child who looks at the world for the first time; or of the traveller who enters a stranger country"*

- Bill Brandt

The role of travel photography is two-fold. The professional photographers aim is to obtain images which will sell, and lure the traveller to the advertised location. The results obtained by the professional are usually 'perfect' which is very seldom a true reflection of the place photographed.

The amateur photographer, or tourist is more interested in recording his holiday. Their main reason for taking photographs is to prove that they actually visited the place, and to preserve the memories in the family photo album. Our family albums serve as instruction manuals for a great awareness of photographic imagery, of our lives and of our past.

The authors objectives are a combination of the above. His chose travel photography because of the desire to travel and explore the unknown, the unfamiliar, to observe foreign cultures and most important to document what is observed and felt. The author seldom takes a photograph simply to record a scene or place. The photograph must reflect the style and feeling is of the photographer.

Mans need to explore, to see, to learn and grow go hand in hand with travel photography.

*"The final reason for the need top photograph everything lies in the very logic of consumption" itself. To consume means to burn, to use up - and, therefore, to need to be replenished."*

- Susan Sontag.

## GLOSSARY

### APERTURE

Size of the lens opening through which the light passes. There are several definitions of aperture.

Ref: Focal Encyclopedia of Photography p 51

### A.S.A.

System of rating the speed of sensitize materials, laid down by the American Standards Association in the A.S.A. Standards. The A.S.A. speed can be expressed either as an arithmetical speed - eg. A.S.A. 100 - or in a logarithmic form.

Ref: Focal Encyclopedia of Photography p 65

### CALOTYPE

Process for making paper negatives in the camera.

Calotype was patented by Fox Talbot in 1841.

- (1) Writing paper was brushed with a solution of silver iodide and potassium iodide and allowed to dry.
- (2) Before use the paper was treated with a solution consisting of silver nitrate, acetic acid and gallic acid crystals.
- (3) Paper was the exposed in camera; about five minutes in bright sunlight at f8.
- (4) After exposure, developed in a silver nitrate and gallic acid solution.

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- (3) Paper was then exposed in camera; about five minutes in bright sunlight at f8.
- (4) After exposure, developed in a silver nitrate and gallic acid solution.



- (5) Then rinsed and fixed in 'hypo', washed and dried

Langford, M. The Story of photography p. 13

## **CIBACHROMES**

Cibachrome is a type of paper used to make colour prints direct from a colour slide. Cibachromes requires a dye-bleach processing/Dye destruction process

Ref: Langford M. Advanced Photography p. 209

## **COLLODION PROCESS (WET PLATE PROCESS)**

Invented by F. Scott Archer in 1851

- (1) To prepare, a clean glass plate is coated with collodian containing potassium and other iodides.
- (2) In the dark, bathed in a solution of silver nitrate.
- (3) The plate is exposed in camera while still wet
- (4) Developed with a solution of ferrous sulphate and acetic acid or pyrogalllic acid.
- (5) Potassium or sodium cyanide or sodium thiosulphate used for fixing.

Ref: Focal Encyclopedia of Photography p. 265

## CONTRAST RANGE

Slide material can cope with a greater contrast range than print films. A typical scene might have a brightness range of 160:1; whereas a slide can have a range of 400:1 or more if projected. The way prints and slides are viewed also has an effect - slides are viewed by transmitted light while prints are viewed by reflected light

Ref: Practical Photography May 1991 p. 74.

## DAGUERREOTYPE PROCESS

Invented by Louis Jacques Mondé Daguerre and published in 1839. Photographs taken by this method were called Daguerreotypes. The process:

- (1) A silver coated copper plate is polished and exposed to iodine vapour.
- (2) The plate is exposed in a camera for up to twenty minutes.
- (3) The plate is developed by placing over mercury vapour.
- (4) The plate is fixed in a weak solution of sodium hyposulphite.
- (5) Plate is washed

Langford M. The story of Photography p. 12.

## DEPTH OF FIELD

The sharply covered depth-zone in a photograph is called the depth of field. The extent of depth of field depends on two factors.

- (1) The distance between subject and lens. The further away the subject, the greater the extent of the sharply covered zone in depth created by any given diaphragm stop.

- (2) The distance between subject and lens. The further away the subject, the greater the extent of the sharply covered zone in depth created by any given diaphragm stop.

Ref: Feininger, A. The Complete Colour Photographer p. 129.

## **DRY PLATE PROCESS**

In the earlier days of Photography, when wet plate process was still popular, it was customary to refer to gelatin coated plates as dry plates.

Ref: Focal Encyclopedia of Photography p. 482.

## **EXCURSIONS DAGUERRIENNES**

Between 1841-1843 N. Le Bours published *Excursions Daguerriennes*, a series of views pulled from copperplate engravings, which had been made from images on daguerreotypes. Lerebours regularly published the developments of photography, as they became known.

Ref: Newhall, N. The history of Photography, p. 27.

## **EXPOSURE LATITUDE**

Exposure latitude varies with subject contrast; Latitude increases as subject contrast decreases - the smaller the difference in brightness between the lightest and darkest areas of a scene, the greater the exposure latitude.

Ref: Feininger, A. The Complete Colour Photographer p. 147.

## FILMS

Films for colour photography are of two types, negative and reversal. Most colour films are intended to produce a visually correct representation of subject colours. They are sensitized or given a colour balance which will produce the desired results when used with illumination of a specified colour temperature. A daylight type emulsion is balanced for 5500 Kelvin illumination. Films for use with tungsten illumination are designated either type A, for 3400 Kelvin light, or type B for 3200 Kelvin illumination. most tungsten balanced colour films have type B emulsions.

Ref: Kodak Encyclopedia of Practical Photography p. 450.

Fujicolor HR II and Fuji Reala are brand names, of a colour negative film. Both these films have a speed of 100ISO, however Fuji Reala is supposed to have a finer grain. Fujichrome 100ISO is a brand name for a colour transparency film.

Infra red Film is sensitized to respond to near infra-red wavelengths. This means it will react to the infra-red in sunlight which is reflected off living green vegetation. However the film is also sensitive to much of the visible spectrum, especially blue. A deep red filter is used to maximize the infra-red effect.

Ref: Langford M. Advanced Photography p. 79.

## FOCAL LENGTH

Focal Length is the distance between the optical centre of the lens and the film when the lens is focused at infinity. The focal length of the lens of most adjustable cameras is marked on the lens barrel.

Ref: Langford M. Advanced Photography p. 94.



## **INTER NEGATIVE**

Intermediate negative - usually a colour negative printed from a colour transparency in order to make a neg/pos colour print.

Ref: Langford, M. Advanced Photography p. 295.

## **LENS SPEED**

The speed of a lens is determined by the relationship between the widest aperture capacity in reaction to it's focal length. For example a 50mm lens with a maximum aperture of f1.2 or a 400mm lens with its maximum aperture at f4.5 are considered fast lenses

Ref: Hedgecoe J. The Art of Colour Photography p 292

## **MACRO LENS**

Lens designed to work at close distances giving images up to life-size

Ref: Hedgecoe, J. The Art of Colour Photography p. 294.

## **MAGNIFICATION**

The relationship between the size of the object photographed and the image of its formed by the lens.

Ref: Focal Encyclopedia of Photography p. 910

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Ref: Focal Encyclopedia of Photography p. 910

## **POLARIZING FILTER**

Filter that passes on only polarized light and can be rotated to block polarized light reaching it, cutting down glare from polished surfaces or from blue sky

Ref: Hedgecoe, J. The Art of Colour Photography p. 292

## **SINGLE LENS REFLEX CAMERA**

Camera system making use of a hinged mirror between the lens and the film, which swings out of the light path when the shutter is open, allowing the taking and viewing functions of a lens to be combined.

Ref: Hedgecoe, J. The Art of Colour Photography p. 296

## **TELECONVERTERS (FOCAL LENGTH EXTENDERS)**

They are negative supplementary lenses that fit between the camera body and the regular lens, increasing its focal length by a factor which, depending on the extender, ranges from 1:85 to 3.

Ref: Feininger, A. The Complete Colour Photographer p. 100

## **TELEPHOTOS**

Compact type of lens with a focal length greater than the diagonal of the film it covers

Ref: Hedgecoe, J. The Art of Colour Photography p. 297

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